

Message Text

CONFIDENTIAL

PAGE 01 QUITO 01446 01 OF 02 041652Z
ACTION ARA-10

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-04 H-01 INR-07 L-03
NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 PRS-01 SP-02 SS-15 USIA-06
ACDA-07 AID-05 OMB-01 TRSE-00 EB-08 DHA-02 IGA-02
IO-13 /094 W
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R 041506Z MAR 77
FM AMEMBASSY QUITO
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 3407

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 1 OF 2 QUITO 1446

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: PFOR, MILI, MASS, EC, PE
SUBJECT: CONVERSATION WITH ECUADOREAN FOREIGN MINISTER

REF: QUITO 1408

1. SUMMARY. THE RECENTLY-INSTALLED FOREIGN MINISTER,
JORGE SALVADOR LARA MADE THE FOLLOWING POINTS TO ME ON THE
EVE OF MY DEPARTURE TO WASHINGTON:

(A) THE GOE INTENDS TO DO EVERYTHING IT CAN TO STRENGTHEN
RELATIONS WITH THE USG AND, WHEN CONSISTENT WITH ITS
NATIONAL INTERESTS, TO SUPPORT THE US IN INTERNATIONAL FORA,
ESPECIALLY ON EAST-WEST ISSUES.

(B) HE HOPES THE GSP EXCLUSION WILL BE LIFTED AND THE KFIR
DECISION REVERSED.

(C) ECUADOR IS TAKING DIPLOMATIC INITIATIVES TO IMPROVE
RELATIONS WITH PERU AND TO REACH OUT TO OTHER SOUTH
AMERICAN COUNTRIES. BUT IT MUST LOOK TO ITS OWN SELF-
DEFENSE AS WELL.

(D) HE SYMPATHIZES WITH THE NEW US EMPHASIS ON HUMAN RIGHTS
CONFIDENTIAL

CONFIDENTIAL

PAGE 02 QUITO 01446 01 OF 02 041652Z

BUT CAUTIONS US TO BE WARY OF TIEING THE ISSUE TOO
CLOSELY TO BILATERAL PROGRAMS.

(E) HE HOPES THE USG WILL AGREE TO RECEIVE THE UNDERSECRETARY
OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS IN THE NEAR FUTURE (REFTEL). END SUMMARY.

2. PAID A CALL ON FOREIGN MINISTER JORGE SALVADOR LARA

PRIOR TO MY DEPARTURE TO WASHINGTON FOR CONSULTATIONS. DURING THE COURSE OF A WIDE-RANGING CONVERSATION THE FOREIGN MINISTER MADE THE FOLLOWING POINTS:

(A) HE FULLY SHARES THE DESIRE OF THE SUPREME COUNCIL OF GOVERNMENT TO STRENGTHEN RELATIONS WITH THE UNITED STATES, INCLUDING DEMOCRATIC IDEALS AND A RESPECT FOR HUMAN RIGHTS. ECUADOR WILL DO EVERYTHING IT CAN CONSISTENT WITH ITS DIGNITY AND NATIONAL INTERESTS TO STRENGTHEN RELATIONS AND TO SUPPORT THE US IN INTERNATIONAL FORA, PARTICULARLY ON EAST-WEST ISSUES WHERE OUR INTERESTS MOST NATURALLY COINCIDE. THERE ARE CERTAIN PROBLEMS IN OUR BILATERAL RELATIONSHIP WHICH HE HOPES CAN BE OVERCOME. TWO OF THESE ARE (1) THE GSP EXCLUSION: HE HOPES THAT THE CARTER ADMINISTRATION WILL ACTIVELY SEEK FAVORABLE CONGRESSIONAL ACTION AND NOTE MERELY ADOPT A PASSIVE ROLE; AND (2) THE RECENT DENIAL OF THE KFIR SALE.

(B) THE LATTER LAUNCHED HIM INTO AN ANALYSIS OF THE SITUATION VIS-A-VIS PERU. HE SAID THAT PERU'S TRADITIONAL MILITARY SUPERIORITY OVER ECUADOR HAS BEEN SHARPLY MAGNIFIED BY RECENT PERUVIAN PURCHASES FROM THE SOVIET UNION. THESE HAVE CAUSED GREAT CONSTERNATION IN ECUADOR, WHILE RECALLS THE HISTORY OF PERUVIAN AGGRESSION IN 1941. HOWEVER, SINCE BECOMING FOREIGN MINISTER IN JANUARY, HE HAS MADE EVERY EFFORT TO IMPROVE RELATIONS WITH PERU. RECENTLY HE SENT A SPECIAL ENVOY TO TALK TO PRESIDENT MORALES BERMUDEZ IN ORDER TO SMOOTH OVER THE BAD FEELINGS LEFT BY THE CANCELLATION OF MORALES' VISIT TO ECUADOR. NEVERTHELESS, HE BELIEVES CONFIDENTIAL

CONFIDENTIAL

PAGE 03 QUITO 01446 01 OF 02 041652Z

THAT THE U.S. DECISION ON THE KFIR SALE WAS A MISTAKE INASMUCH AS ECUADOR NEEDS TO HAVE THE WHEREWITHAL TO DEFEND ITSELF AGAINST PERU. HE EMPHASIZED HIS CONCERN OVER THE FACT THAT PERU'S ARMS WERE COMING FROM THE SOVIET UNION, WHICH HE SAID IMPLIED A NEW DESTABILIZING FACTOR IN THE POLITICS OF THE SOUTH AMERICAN CONTINENT. ALTHOUGH IT APPEARED THAT WASHINGTON'S DECISION ON THE KFIR WAS FINAL, HE STILL HOPES THAT THE USG COULD BE PERSUADED TO CHANGE ITS MIND.

(C) ECUADOR HAS EMBARKED ON A DELIBERATE CAMPAIGN TO STRENGTHEN RELATIONS WITH OTHER SOUTH AMERICAN COUNTRIES, PARTLY, HE IMPLIED, TO COUNTER THE PERUVIAN THREAT. HE MENTIONED THE RECENT MEETING OF THE BRAZILIAN-ECUADOREAN COMMISSION AT THE SUBSECRETARY LEVEL, THE CHIEF OF STATE VISIT WITH COLOMBIA, AND AN ECONOMIC MISSION TO CHILE. HE SAID THAT HE HIMSELF WOULD BE VISITING BOTH CHILE AND ARGENTINA (IN ADDITION TO A VISIT TO BRAZIL WHICH HAS ALREADY BEEN ANNOUNCED), PROBABLY DURING THE MONTH OF APRIL. HE SAID THAT

ALTHOUGH ECUADOR IS CONCERNED ABOUT THE HUMAN RIGHTS SITUATION IN BOTH CHILE AND ARGENTINA, IT IS IN ECUADOR'S INTEREST TO HAVE GOOD RELATIONS WITH BOTH COUNTRIES. FOR THIS REASON ECUADOR HAS ABSTAINED ON VOTES IN THE UN CONDEMNING CHILE. HE ALSO TOLD ME THAT THE ECUADOREAN DELEGATION WOULD OPPOSE THE U.S. INITIATIVE IN THE HUMAN RIGHTS COMMISSION IN GENEVA TO INVESTIGATE THE SITUATION IN ARGENTINA. HE SAID THAT IT WAS NOT BECAUSE ECUADOR LACKED SYMPATHY FOR THE U.S. POINT OF VIEW, BUT THAT THERE WERE CERTAIN PROCEDURAL DEFECTS IN THE U.S. RESOLUTION. HE MENTIONED, HOWEVER, THAT ONE OF THE REASONS THAT HE WOULD LIKE TO BE ABLE TO VISIT THE UNITED STATES SOMETIME IN THE NEAR FUTURE WOULD BE TO COUNTERBALANCE IN THE PUBLIC EYE HIS VISIT TO THE TWO DICTATORSHIPS IN THE SOUTHERN CONE (EH DID NOT MENTION BRAZIL IN THIS CONTEXT).

CONFIDENTIAL

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PAGE 01 QUITO 01446 02 OF 02 041704Z
ACTION ARA-10

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-04 H-01 INR-07 L-03
NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 PRS-01 SP-02 SS-15 USIA-06
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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 2 OF 2 QUITO 1446

(D) REGARDING HUMAN RIGHTS HE SAID THAT WHILE HE FULLY UNDERSTANDS AND SYMPATHIZES WITH THE U.S.' NEW EMPHASIS ON HUMAN RIGHTS IN ITS FOREIGN POLICY, HE FEELS THAT THE U.S. SHOULD CONSIDER THE LESSONS OF HISTORY IN THIS REGARD. HE MENTIONED VARIOUS LATIN AMERICAN DOCTRINES (FOR EXAMPLE, THE TOBAR DOCTRINE AND THE SO-CALLED BETANCOURT DOCTRINE) WHICH WERE AIMED AT WITHHOLDING RECOGNITION FROM DICTATORIAL REGIMES. THESE EFFORTS, HE SAID, HAD BEEN RESOUNDING FAILURES. HE THOUGHT THAT THE UNITED STATES MIGHT BE MAKING A MISTAKE IN TOO CLOSELY LINKING THE HUMAN RIGHTS ISSUE WITH OTHER BILATERAL RELATIONSHIPS. RATHER, HE SAID, WE SHOULD AIM AT STRENGTHENING THE HUMAN RIGHTS COMMISSIONS IN THE VARIOUS MULTILATERAL FORA IN ORDER TO BRING PRESSURE TO

BEAR ON THE HUMAN RIGHTS QUESTION. APROPOS THIS SUBJECT HE CONFIDED IN ME THAT HE HAD ACCEPTED THE JOB OF FOREIGN MINISTER ON THE CONDITION THAT THE GOVERNMENT WOULD NOT DO ANYTHING TO VIOLATE HUMAN RIGHTS IN ECUADOR, AND SPECIFICALLY NOT TO EXILE POLITICAL DISSENTERS TO THE JUNGLE REGION, WHICH HAS BEEN A PRACTICE HERE IN THE PAST.

(E) RETURNING TO THE ECUADOR-PERU PROBLEM, THE FOREIGN MINISTER SAID THAT IT IS STILL ECUADOR'S ASPIRATION TO OBTAIN AN OUTLET TO THE AMAZON VIA THE MARANON RIVER, BUT THAT HE
CONFIDENTIAL

CONFIDENTIAL

PAGE 02 QUITO 01446 02 OF 02 041704Z

INTENDS TO PROCEED VERY CAUTIOUSLY IN THIS REGARD SO AS NOT TO EXACERBATE EXISTING TENSIONS IN THE REGION. HE HOPES THAT ECUADOR CAN EVENTUALLY COUNT ON THE SUPPORT OF THE POERS GUARANTEEING THE RIO PROTOCOL, INCLUDING THE UNITED STATES.

3. ONE OF THE MOST INTERESTING POINTS THE FOREIGN MINISTER MADE REFERRED TO A POSSIBLE VISIT TO LATIN AMERICA BY PRESIDENT CARTER. HE SAID THAT HE THOUGHT THAT NO OTHER SINGLE MOVE BY THE NEW ADMINISTRATION COULD DO AS MUCH TO SET A NEW AND FAVORABLE TONE FOR U.S.-LATIN AMERICAN RELATIONS THAN A VISIT BY OUR NEW PRESIDENT DURING THE COURSE OF THIS YEAR. INTERESTINGLY HE LINKED A CARTER VISIT TO LATIN AMERICA WITH A POSSIBLE BREZHNEV VISIT TO THE U.S. IF THE CARTER VISIT TO LATIN AMERICA WERE TO TAKE PLACE AFTER THE BREZHNEV VISIT THE RUSSIANS WOULD HAVE NO INHIBITIONS IN INSTRUCTING THE COMMUNIST PARTIES OF THE VARIOUS COUNTRIES TO RAISE CAIN DURING A PRESIDENTIAL VISIT. (HE REMINDED ME OF THE EVENTS DURING NELSON ROCKEFELLER'S TRIP IN 1969). HOWEVER, IF THE PRESIDENT WERE TO VISIT THE AREA BEFORE BREZHNEV CAME TO THE U.S., THE RUSSIANS MIGHT BE INHIBITED ABOUT CONSENTING TO TROUBLEMAKING BY THE COMMUNISTS IN LATIN AMERICA IN THE FEAR THAT IT MIGHT SOMEHOW SOUR THE BREZHNEV VISIT TO THE U.S.

4. THE FOREIGN MINISTER SAID THAT WHILE IT WOULD BE NATURAL FOR PRESIDENT CARTER TO WISH TO VISIT THE FEW DEMOCRACIES IN LATIN AMERICA AND NOT TO GO TO THE DICTATORSHIPS, HE THOUGHT THE LATTER COURSE OF ACTION WOULD BE A MISTAKE. HE RECOMMENDED THAT THE PRESIDENT VISIT ALL THE ANDEAN COUNTRIES INCLUDING CHILE, BECAUSE, HE SAID, SUCH A VISIT BY AN AMERICAN RESIDENT AT THIS TIME WOULD DO MUCH TO HELP THE CAUSE OF PEACE IN THE SUBREGION. HE FELT THAT IT WOULD BE PARTICULARLY APPROPRIATE FOR PRESIDENT CARTER TO VISIT ECUADOR ON SUCH A TRIP IN VIEW OF THE FACT THAT ECUADOR IS CURRENTLY UNIQUE IN ALL OF LATIN AMERICA IN THAT A MILITARY GOVERNMENT WAS IN THE PROCESS OF DELIBERATELY TURNING POWER BACK TO CIVILIANS.
CONFIDENTIAL

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PAGE 03 QUITO 01446 02 OF 02 041704Z

INDEED, HE TOLD ME THAT A RECENT HIGH-LEVEL VISITOR FROM AN UNNAMED LATIN AMERICAN DICTATORSHIP HAD TOLD PRESIDENT POVEDA THAT HIS GOVERNMENT WAS VERY CONCERNED ABOUT THE PROCESS OF RETURN TO CIVILIAN RULE IN ECUADOR BECAUSE IT MIGHT PROVE TO BE A BAD EXAMPLE FOR HIS OWN COUNTRY. THE PRESIDENT HAD QUIETLY TOLD HIM THAT THE "RETORNO" WAS ECUADOR'S INTERNAL AFFAIR.

5. THE FOREIGN MINISTER SAID HE HOPED THE USG WOULD BE ABLE TO RECEIVE UNDERSECRETARY AYALA, AS SUCH A VISIT COULD BE VERY USEFUL FOR THE GOE IN THESE EARLY MONTHS OF A NEW ADMINISTRATION. (REFTEL)
BLOOMFIELD

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Message Attributes

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